TELLING THE TRUTH
EVEN WHEN IT’S HARD
THE DIFFICULT TRUTH...

$250,000 – $2 MILLION

The average lifetime expenses of social services and incarceration for a high-risk individual, estimated by the Journal of Criminology

$45,917

The average cost per year to house an prisoner in the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC) for fiscal year 2010

140%

The total custody overcrowding rate for DOC facilities as of June 28, 2010

152%

The overcrowding rate for medium security facilities

$80,887

The average lifetime cost of institutionalization for an individual without a high school diploma

$5,300

The amount the average high school dropout received in cash and in-kind transfers from the federal and state governments beyond the taxes he/she paid in 2002 and 2004

43%

The overall recidivism rate for prisoners released in 2004. A recidivist is defined as any criminally sentenced inmate released to the street who is reincarcerated for a new sentence or violation of parole or probation to a Massachusetts state or county facility or to a federal facility within three years of his/her release.
Por favor acepte este Informe Anual de Roca del año Fiscal 2011 como nuestro agradecimiento por su apoyo en los últimos 12 meses. En este vigésimo tercer año de servicios a los jóvenes de alto riesgo social en las comunidades de Chelsea, East Boston, Revere y Springfield, Roca se ha destacado de la misma manera por todos sus nuevos éxitos y desafíos. Estamos sumamente entusiasmados con el trabajo de Roca en Springfield. Con el lanzamiento oficial de nuestra sede en el oeste de Massachusetts, pudimos extender significativamente nuestra capacidad de programas y servicios en el área de Springfield. Este informe nos da la oportunidad de compartir nuestro reciente trabajo, al igual que muchos otros logros emocionantes que Roca ha obtenido en este último año. El Informe Anual de Roca del año Fiscal 2011 también permite que le demos a ustedes, nuestros socios, partidarios y amigos, un sentido del futuro de la organización.

Al reflexionar sobre los desafíos y los éxitos de los últimos doce meses, dos temas unificadores surgieron de nuestra experiencia: decir la verdad, y permanecer en ella. Esencialmente, Roca es capaz de lograr su objetivo de ayudar a los jóvenes de alto riesgo social a cambiar sus vidas por estos dos principios básicos - que tenemos que enfrentar los hechos, por difícil que sea, y que debemos seguir con el trabajo, sin darle importancia por difícil que sea. Lo menos que merecen los jóvenes y las comunidades servidos por Roca es nuestra total honestidad y compromiso pleno. El compromiso y la honestidad son los principios básicos que guían a cada miembro de nuestra organización, desde la Junta Directiva hasta los que trabajan con los jóvenes. Esperamos que sigan con nosotros a medida que trabajamos para el cambio, y una vez más, agradecemos profundamente su apoyo.

Harry Spence
Roca Board President

Molly Baldwin
Roca Executive Director
Roca’s cognitive-behavioral Intervention Model is designed to create behavior change in very high-risk young people and move them out of violence and poverty over two years with two additional years of supportive follow-up.

Roca seeks out the most difficult, challenging individuals for whom other programming has failed, and systematically works to establish positive, consistent relationships built on trust and respect. These relationships are then used as a vehicle to push young people toward goals of social and educational engagement, economic independence and living out of harm’s way.

Roca takes a unique approach to moving very high-risk young people out of violence and poverty. Roca doesn’t wait for these young people to re-engage in society on their own. Left to their own devices, most never will. Instead, we go out and find them on the streets. We tell them the truth, teach them to trust, and help them learn and practice the skills needed to transform their lives and get on the path to achieving economic independence. As part of this work, Roca provides comprehensive life-skills, education, and employment programming that engages young people in stage-based acquisition of skills, personal development, and behavioral change.

Roca also works with public agencies and other organizations to change how they work with high-risk young people, driving systemic reform through the creation of more effective, economically efficient public policy.

Roca’s Intervention Model helps young people get off the streets, get out of gangs, stop using drugs, reduce risky sexual behavior, re-invest in education, and retain employment.

Roca’s proven intervention strategies help young people change their behavior in stages, first focusing on short-term goals, then intermediate gains, and finally, long-term, sustained accomplishments. Using concrete measures to track positive change toward mutually agreed upon life outcomes, Roca staff implement individualized service plans based on each participant’s unique needs.
YOUNG PERSON’S TIMELINE 

THROUGH ROCA’S HIGH-RISK IN

THE YOUTH WORKER WILL:

– Have the young person assigned to caseload and will immediately begin trying to make 2-3 weekly contacts to establish relationship.

– Over the initial 60 day period, the Youth Worker assesses the eligibility of the young person for the model. Eligibility means that the young person meets the target population risk criteria and cannot participate in other programs.

ONCE YOUNG PERSON IS ENROLLED:

– The youth worker will try to engage the young person in some stage based programming.

– The youth worker will begin working on the workforce readiness criteria with the young person ready which starts with basic workforce readiness including IDs, birth certificates, health insurance, workforce readiness workshops, etc...

– The youth worker will try to get the young person engaged in stage based educational programming starting with a baseline educational assessment.

– The youth worker will work to deepen the relationship and to allow for the young person to test the relationship and the youth workers consistency.

– The youth worker will be able to have the young person complete the out of harm’s way assessment and will develop a service plan to identify the behavior changes that will be worked toward in order to move toward outcomes.

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT 

| DAY 1 ............................................... 6TH MONTH |

SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (YEARS 1-2) PROGRESS THROUGH STAGES OF CHANGE ASSESSED AS WORK READY POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

NO NEW ARRESTS 86%

NO NEW PREGNANCIES 81%

IN FY’11 ROCA SERVED A TOTAL OF 763 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHELSEA, EAST BOSTON, REVERE, AND SPRINGFIELD THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT IN LIFE SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION

OF ROCA’S FY’11 GRADUATES:

90% SUSTAINED EMPLOYMENT AND/OR ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

86% NO NEW ARRESTS

81% NO NEW PREGNANCIES

PHASE 2 BEHAVIOR CHANGE

| 6TH MONTH ......................................... 24TH MONTH |

Day 1 of

CRITERIA TO MOVE TO PHASE 3

THE YOUNG PERSON MUST:

– Be enrolled for 21-24 months

– Attainment of intermediate outcomes: placement in employment, educational gains, no new arrests, no new technical violations

– Complete out of harm’s way assessment follow up

By 12th month:

– Have a minimum of 1 visit to a health clinic, MGH (Massachusetts General Hospital) has a satellite teen health clinic located in Roça’s Chelsea building.

By 18th -24th month:

– Meet programming attendance standards.

– Complete all Workforce Readiness Criteria including two Prevocational classes (culinary arts, carpentry classes and green cleaning)

– Continuous engagement in educational programming

– Complete involvement with transitional employment through the KEY Project.

PHASE 3 OUTCOMES

| 24TH MONTH ........................................ 72ND MONTH |

Day 1 of

CRITERIA TO MOVE TO PHASE 4

THE YOUNG PERSON MUST:

– Complete all intermediate outcomes: placement in employment, educational gains, no new arrests, no new technical violations

– Be enrolled for 24-36 months

– Attainment of long term outcomes: life skills, employment, education, no new arrests, no new technical violations

– Complete out of harm’s way assessment follow up

By 36th month:

– Meet programming attendance standards.

– Complete all Workforce Readiness Criteria including two Prevocational classes (culinary arts, carpentry classes and green cleaning)

– Complete involvement with transitional employment through the KEY Project.

– Complete all intermediate outcomes: placement in employment, educational gains, no new arrests, no new technical violations

– Complete out of harm’s way assessment follow up
YOUNG PERSON’S TIMELINE THROUGH ROCA’S HIGH-RISK INTERVENTION MODEL

Roca tracks participant outcome data and performance indicators throughout a young person’s time at Roca, which measures the young person’s progress, inform the young person’s service plan and track the effectiveness of overall programming. Outcomes are tracked and analyzed for each young person throughout their engagement and one year after completing the entire model.

Also a comprehensive annual outcomes data report is produced on all young people engaged in the intervention model.

IN FY’11 ROCA SERVED A TOTAL OF 763 YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CHELSEA, EAST BOSTON, REVERE, AND SPRINGFIELD THROUGH TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT IN LIFE SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION.

OF ROCA’S FY’11 GRADUATES:
- 90% SUSTAINED EMPLOYMENT AND/or ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION
- 86% NO NEW ARRESTS
- 81% NO NEW PREGNANCIES

YOUNG PERSON’S TIMELINE THROUGH ROCA’S HIGH-RISK INTERVENTION MODEL

**PHASE 1: ENGAGEMENT**

**THE YOUTH WORKER WILL:**
- Have the young person assigned to caseload and will immediately begin trying to make 2-3 weekly contacts to establish relationship.
- Over the initial 60 day period, the Youth Worker assesses the eligibility of the young person for the model. Eligibility means that the young person meets the target population risk criteria and cannot participate in other programs.

**ONCE YOUNG PERSON IS ENROLLED:**
- The youth worker will try to engage the young person in some stage based programming.
- The youth worker will begin working on the workforce readiness criteria with the young person which starts with gathering ID’s, birth certificates, enrolling in health insurance, attending workforce readiness workshop and enrolling in transitional employment.
- The youth worker will try to get the young person engaged in stage based educational programming starting with baseline educational assessment.
- The youth worker will work to deepen the relationship and to allow for the young person to test the relationship and the youth worker’s consistency.
- The youth worker will be able to have the young person complete the out of harm’s way assessment and will develop a service plan to identify the behavior changes that will be worked toward in order to move towards outcomes.

**CRITERIA TO MOVE TO PHASE 2 THE YOUNG PERSON AND YOUTH WORKER MUST:**
- Be in a 4-6 month relationship
- Experience a relapse in the relationship
- Completed Baseline Assessment
- Service Plan is developed

**PHASE 2: BEHAVIOR CHANGE**

**WITH THE SUPPORT OF THEIR YOUTH WORKER THE YOUNG PERSON WILL:**
- Continue to meet with their Youth Worker 2 to 3 times per week.
- Attend Stage Based Programming offered at Roca at least 2x per week. This includes life skills programming and educational and prevocational training.
- By 12th month:
  - Have a minimum of 1 visit to a health clinic, MGH (Massachusetts General Hospital) has a satellite teen health clinic located in Roca’s Chelsea building.
- By 24th-26th month:
  - Meet programming attendance standards.
  - Complete all Workforce Readiness Criteria including two Prevocational classes (culinary arts, carpentry classes, green cleaning, etc.)
  - Continuous engagement in educational programming
  - Complete involvement with transitional employment through the KEY Project.

**CRITERIA TO MOVE TO PHASE 3 THE YOUNG PERSON MUST:**
- Be enrolled for 21-24 months
- Attainment of intermediate outcomes: placement in employment, educational gains, no new arrests, no new technical violations
- Complete out of harm’s way assessment follow up

**PHASE 3: SUSTAINING**

**WITH THE SUPPORT OF THEIR YOUTH WORKER THE YOUNG PERSON WILL:**
- Attend Stage Based Programming as needed
- By 27th month:
  - Continue to meet with their Youth Worker 2 times per week
  - Attend Service Plan.
- By 30th month:
  - Continue to meet with their Youth Worker 1 time per week
  - Retain employment for 6 consecutive months
- By 36th month:
  - Continue to meet with their Youth Worker 2 times per month
  - Retain employment for 1 year
- By 48th month:
  - Continue to meet with their Youth Worker once per month

**COMPLETION OF PROGRAMMING**

**SHORT TERM OUTCOMES (YEARS 1-2)**
- PROGRESS THROUGH STAGES OF CHANGE
- ASSESSED AS WORK READY
- POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

**INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (YEARS 2-4)**
- EMPLOYMENT RETENTION
- EDUCATIONAL GAINS
- NO NEW ENCARCERATIONS
A NEW CHAPTER IN SERVICE:
REPLICATING ROCA’S INTERVENTION MODEL IN SPRINGFIELD, MA

In 2009, Roca made the unprecedented decision to expand services to an entirely new community, and fully replicate the Intervention Model in Springfield, MA. The decision to open Roca Springfield was based on two basic, yet equally important factors, both relating to the City of Springfield itself: Springfield is both a community of great need and one of great resources. The city continues to rank among the poorest, most violent communities in the Commonwealth, with high levels of gang activity, youth disengagement and unemployment. But Springfield also benefits from having a wide range of dedicated leaders and community organizations.

Among Springfield’s dedicated leaders, is Hamden County Sheriff Michael Ashe. Ashe, one of the most well-respected criminal justice leaders in Massachusetts, played an instrumental role in helping replicate Roca’s Intervention Model. Our work in Springfield began in 2008, when the Sheriff asked Roca to help him create a transitional employment program for prisoners under his jurisdiction. The creation of this program was a success, and as Roca’s partnership with the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department matured and strengthened, Sheriff Ashe urged Roca to bring its full Intervention Model to the city.

Roca’s leadership was excited about the opportunity, but also understood it to be a challenging undertaking that would require substantial efforts in increasing the organization’s operational, financial and infrastructural capacity, including the purchase and renovation of a new facility. But, with great encouragement from the Sheriff and others, Roca gave the project a green light. And with the help from the Sheriff, Roca made very deliberate steps forward in gaining the crucial community, political and financial support necessary for successfully replicating the Intervention Model in Springfield. Soon after making the decision to proceed with replication, an advisory board for the project was formed and Roca soon had the formal guidance and assistance of some of Springfield area’s biggest business and community leaders.

In November 2009, with critical partnerships established with the Springfield Police Department and The City of Springfield, Roca was awarded a $700,000 Challenge Grant from Strategic Grant Partners in support of the replication project, providing the necessary funds for launching Roca’s new site. Roca hired a Springfield program director, Yusef Id-Deen and several staff members to implement the replication. By summer, 2010, Roca’s replication was in full swing, temporarily operating the Intervention Model from offices at the Hampden County Sheriff’s Dept and serving 50 high-risk young men. As full program replication was underway, Roca was simultaneously engaged in a capital campaign to support the purchase and renovation of a property. Roca acquired the new property in 2010, and began renovating the facility to properly accommodate Intervention Model programming, including computer labs, a full industrial kitchen for pre-voc classes, GED class rooms, a recording studio, fitness center, administrative spaces and more.

On June 27, Roca celebrated the grand opening of the new Springfield site headquarters, and dedicated the facility in the name of Sheriff Ashe and his brother and colleague Michael. On that day, Roca was joined by hundreds of supporters and community partners including Congressman Richard Neal, Springfield Mayor Dominic Sarno, and Police Chief William Fitchet. This year, we continue to expand our service to and with the City of Springfield, serving a projected 100 high-risk young men by the end of 2012. As we move forward and serve more and more young people from western Massachusetts, we realize that none of this work would be possible without our many dedicated partners and the willingness of the Springfield community to embrace Roca’s mission.
It’s fair to say that Springfield, MA is a tough city. For years it’s been plagued by staggering levels of unemployment, gang violence, and a shrinking population. But it’s also a city with a proud history. And as a center of higher education and business, it still has great potential. Springfield natives Janet Callahan and Robert Greeley have never lost sight of that potential—but they’ve also never shied away from confronting the city’s problems.

Jan, President of Palmer Paving, and Bob, CEO of RJ Greeley Commercial and Industrial Real Estate, have spent their lives building strong business and community partnerships in Springfield, with the intention of making the city a better place to live and work. So when they were presented with the opportunity to help Roca with its first full-scale replication, they immediately recognized the importance of the partnership. In Bob and Jan, two local experts in real estate and construction, Roca found the perfect partners to help purchase and renovate a new site headquarters. Jan, whose company provided thousands of dollars of in-kind paving work, also played an instrumental role in raising capital money for the project—$50,000 to be exact. Reflecting on her work with Roca, she’s quick to point out the long-term impact on the city:

“We partnered with Roca because it’s the right thing to do for our community and we believe Roca’s work will not only help young people change their lives forever, but it will also help the local businesses, public safety, and I strongly believe it will help our city become what is once was—a city of opportunities and growth.”

Bob, who donated a tremendous amount of time to managing the renovation of the new facility, knows what it’s like to personally overcome some of the same troubles that face Springfield’s young people. When asked about the project, he expressed a true sense of ownership in making the building exactly right for the youth Roca serves. “I know what it’s like to feel alone and sometimes with no hope. But I also know what it’s like to become sober and be in recovery—and it was because of an adult and a place that really cared about my life, enough to guide me to succeed. I know Roca will do this for so many of the young people that are lost in our community and I am honored to be part of this change process.”

Roca is honored to call Janet Callahan and Robert Greeley true partners in our mission to help Springfield’s high-risk young people move out of violence and poverty. We could not be more grateful to Bob and Jan for their generosity, hard work and commitment to this project.
Rebuilding a City, from the Young People Up

A profile of Roca Springfield Partners Janet Callahan and Robert Greeley

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On September 6, 2010, I lost my brother to the violence in Chelsea. He was shot and killed in his home. For a long time, I just could not accept his loss. My brother and I both had hard walks of life. We both wanted to change but always found it hard. After my brother’s death, I found myself coming to Roca a lot, because it was the only place that gave me a sense of hope, and kept reminding me to live, keep moving, keep changing and begin making a legacy for myself.

Today, more than a year after my brother’s death, I have found new hope. I am a leader, a mentor, and a young woman who continues to positively change my life. Growing up in Chelsea, there was a sense that young people wouldn’t make it here. I concluded that the world was going to be only what was in front of me - a place with no opportunities, no chance to grow, and no way to survive. I grew up being used to people getting shot in my neighborhood, and having counselors at school talk to us about gun violence.

Growing up wasn’t easy - the feeling of not belonging or not wanting to belong consumed me. I hung out with people who were smoking, drinking, and skipping school every day and many times, I would purposely do things to get suspended or expelled from school. Anger and rage made me not really respect life. I did some things out on the streets because I just didn’t know any better. At the same time, my brother had his own struggles and was trying to figure out his own place in this world. He was surrounded by drugs, gangs, and violence. Many would say that his outcome was due to his life choices; I say, no one deserves to die the way he did, and no one can judge unless they know how much he tried to change until his very last breath.

After my brother died, I thought about life differently; I could not walk around my community knowing another person could be killed due to senseless acts of violence. I started to come more to Roca and began to ask myself what I had to do to grow and keep my brother’s memory alive. I had to look at myself in ways I never imagined. Yes, it was hard, and I can honestly say that I messed up a few times before I could actually accept the process of change. But Roca staff did not let me fail. They would show up every morning to make sure I got to work on time. Eventually I realized that if they didn’t fail me, then I didn’t have to fail myself either. Roca is a bridge between trouble and hope. I am alive and able to share my story because they helped me see that I could make the right choices. And instead of choosing negativity and trouble, I chose to be hopeful. I hope that others will join the same process.
Roca knows that when a young person is re-engaged through positive and intensive relationships, he or she can go on to gain competencies in life skills, education and employment. It is the Roca youth worker's job to facilitate this process on the most fundamental level. Youth workers are the front line staff, responsible for finding young people, getting them off the streets, enrolling them in Roca programming, and supporting them throughout their process of change.

Youth workers do not wait for high-risk young people to show up at Roca's doors, because they never will. Youth workers build relationships with young people by seeking them out wherever they may be - learning where they hang out, knocking on their doors, and continuously circling the neighborhood to find them. It is the relentlessness of the youth worker who shows up day after day, no matter what, that awakens hope in a young person. As trust builds between the youth and the youth worker, and the visits to Roca increase, their relationship is used as a vehicle to strategically move the young person along a pathway toward positive behavior change and sustained engagement in education and employment programming.

Every youth worker carries a caseload of 25 young people and connects with each of those young people no less than three times each week. Youth workers are available 24 hours a day and are often the one adult in a young person's life who is there when they go to court or enter lock up; who visits them during incarceration and picks them up when they are out. Their relationship is not a friendship - it is more profound - effectively intentional, and mutually respectful. Youth workers are trained in motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioral strategies, preparing them to effectively guide and support young people.

Ultimately, the role of the youth worker is to motivate young people to participate in programming and decide for themselves that they want to change and take concrete actions to change. Youth workers support young people when they have setbacks or relapses, support young people when their families are unable or unwilling, and protect young people from harm when they are not protecting themselves. At root, youth workers challenge young people when they are not challenging themselves.
IGNACIA SANTOS HAS THE LONGEST ACTIVE TENURE OF ANY YOUTH WORKER AT ROCA AND CONSISTENTLY RANKS, BY PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES STANDARDS, AMONG THE ORGANIZATION’S TOP PERFORMING FRONTLINE STAFF. THOUGH MODEST IN DISCUSSING HER OWN SUCCESS AS A YOUTH WORKER, BOTH HER COLLEAGUES AND THE PARTICIPANTS ON HER CASELOAD WILL QUICKLY TELL YOU THAT IGNACIA POSSESSES A RARE COMBINATION OF SINCERITY, PERSISTENCE, NO-NONSENSE TOUGH LOVE, AND TRUE MOTHERLY AFFECTION. WHEN ASKED TO DESCRIBE WHY HER APPROACH IS SUCCESSFUL, IGNACIA HAD THIS TO SAY:

“I think young people trust me and listen to me because I never leave them alone! And though I am tough with them, I also follow up in helping them with any problem they have - large or small - I never ignore them. I always respond. When they realize that you are there for them – all the time, not just sometimes – then they begin to trust you. Then they start listening to you, taking your advice, thinking about the steps they need to make to make their lives better. I am like a mom that won’t leave them alone. They might get sick of me, but they know I will always be there for them.”

— IGNACIA SANTOS, LONGEST ACTIVE TENURE OF ANY YOUTH WORKER AT ROCA
I've had many regrets in my life — from not completing high school to becoming involved in streets gangs, using drugs, and causing harm to myself and my family. Violence was everywhere I went, because I chose to be in places that made me feel powerful, feared and where influences of education and having a better life were not talked about. It was easy to be influenced by the streets, especially when I didn't have support or love from anywhere else. And in the midst of the chaos and violence, I did not love myself. I thought that what was broken would always be broken. But Roca helped me understand that I had to patiently pick myself up, and mend myself until I was whole and good as new.

I live in East Boston and I was always fighting with rival gangs and getting high. I felt powerless, dishonest, and living a life I didn’t want. Then I found Roca — or at least, Roca found me. When I was at my lowest, I remember an orange shirt coming out of a van and asking me and other people if we wanted our GEDs or to take pre-vocational classes. Many of my friends who are involved in the street life avoided Roca. They didn’t want to change, and didn’t really believe what Roca had to offer because they had been let down by so many people and systems. Even though I didn’t trust Roca at that time, I figured that chances are so hard to come by, I had nothing to lose. So I let Roca’s youth worker talk me into coming to a few classes and programs. I didn’t make it easy for my youth worker, but she relentlessly attempted to pick me up every day to get me to go to Roca. She would go to the streets, to my house, and even to my friend’s house to look for me.

One day I remember my youth worker walking me up the ramp to Roca and smelling this delicious cuisine and asking her if there was a kitchen. But before she could answer, I was up the ramp seeing a class full of young people like myself, being trained by this tall man with a chef’s hat in a huge kitchen. I was amazed at what I was seeing - a real chef, real people like me, and the chef asking, “Want to join us?” No one ever trusted or invited me into anything, and for the first time I felt vulnerable. My youth worker looked at me and said, “I’ll see you in an hour to take you to GED classes.” I heard everyone in the kitchen talk about their jobs at Roca, their youth workers, their classes, their weekends, all while cooking. It made me feel human again and I came to understand that, just because someone messes up, doesn’t mean that, within time, they can’t find a way to change for the better. I decided I could do the same.

I found myself going to Roca every day to be in the kitchen. It became my sanctuary. I enjoyed all the conversations I had with the chef, even if they were hard talks about accountability and changing. I had no regrets in the kitchen. The more time I spent there, the more I learned about myself and the less I was in the streets. There were a few times I relapsed - well, maybe more than a few - but I always found myself back in the kitchen ready to try again.

For many, waking up every day is a routine. For me it’s a blessing - another chance to change my life. I have so much I want to accomplish: I want to be able to be the next to lead Roca’s Kitchen, I want to finally get my GED, I want to make the right decisions. I’m not perfect and I am still working on my change process. But it was the kitchen that saved my life. I even learned to love myself again, all because a woman with an orange shirt showed up in my block with a chance of a lifetime.
Over the years, Roca HAS WORKED HARD TO BUILD AN ENGAGED NETWORK OF INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS – partners we learn from, who learn from us, and most importantly, whom we work with daily to help young people change. But in every caring community and every developing partnership, there remains the need for great leadership. Roca has been privileged to work with three of the most outstanding leaders in the field: Commissioner Jane Tewksbury, Deputy Commissioner Edward Dolan and Assistant Commissioner Peter Forbes of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS).

Together, these three visionary leaders have transformed DYS into one of the best state-run youth and social services agencies in the country. Under the leadership of Jane, Ed and Peter, DYS has moved from employing traditional, punitive intervention practices to innovative, data-driven, evidence and relationship-based youth development strategies, and achieved remarkable results for young people. The agency has been an invaluable asset to Roca and many other organizations in Massachusetts.

Considering the backgrounds of the three colleagues, their dedication comes as no surprise. Jane Tewksbury, the first in her family to attend college, was driven by the desire to give others the chance to succeed that she herself had been blessed with: “Positions of authority and power allow us to do the right thing in providing access and opportunity for people from all walks of life to realize their full potential”. Ed Dolan grew up in Chelsea and, as a child, witnessed youth violence first-hand. But he also grew up, as he puts it, “with the value that government could make the world better, could solve social problems”. Peter Forbes’ work with high-risk youth began back in his teenage years at the East Boston Social Center, and soon after as a case-worker with DYS in the 1980’s.

For Jane, Ed and Peter, staying with the work, even when it’s difficult or thankless, has never been in question. “We can make an actual difference,” Commissioner Tewksbury says, reflecting on the rewards of the work. “A youth who seems to be on that cradle-to-prison pipeline, can actually be taken off that track and put on a track to much more positive life outcomes. For all the frustration of this work, and for every youth that we are not successful with, there are two youth that we are successful with and that’s exhilarating”. At Roca, we couldn’t agree more – and we couldn’t be more honored to work with such dedicated, talented partners.
When I was young, I grew up in a very bad environment. I started gangbanging at a very young age, getting in fights with rival gangs, shoot outs, and bouncing in and out of jail over and over. Whenever I got out of jail, I would go right back to the streets, robbing cars, breaking into houses, and selling drugs every day. I had no job and I made all my money by doing these bad things. I feel like I wasted all of my youth, being on the streets, and bouncing in and out of prison. I ended up spending so much time in jail that it was like a second home to me.

Eventually, I made the decision that I needed to choose a different life. But I couldn't have done it without someone pushing me. One day when I was out on the block, a Roca youth worker started talking to me. At first, I told him to leave me alone. But after seeing him come back to me over and over every week, I finally decided to go into Roca. When I first got to Roca, I was still involved in all the bad stuff out in the streets. But, as time went by, I started to spend more and more time with my youth worker and spent more time going to the programming there. It took me a while to finally decide I didn't want to be out in the streets at all.

Even when I kept screwing up, my youth worker never gave up on me. There were many times over the two years I spent at Roca that I would get sick of going to programming, and would disappear and go back to the block. But every time that happened, my youth worker would go out and find me, and convince me to come back in. I'd never had anybody who cared so much about me doing the right thing. He helped me realize that the decisions I made affected more people than just me. Eventually I realized that my actions would influence my daughter's life as much as my own.

After being at Roca for a couple years, I decided that I could really do better for her and my family and not raise her in that type of situation. I never wanted her to think I was a low life. I also realized that I had put my own parents through so much, and that I needed to show them I could be a better person. My daughter is the most important thing in my life. She keeps me going when things get hard. For the past year, I have had a full time job in food services at Northeastern University and I have a steady paycheck for the first time in my life. My youth worker still checks in with me all the time to make sure I'm doing well and I still drop by Roca a lot to keep working on doing the right thing. A few years ago, I never could have imagined having a job and doing the right thing. Although it took me awhile to choose the right path, I was able to finally make the right choices.
In his three years as the President of Roca’s Board of Directors, Joe Fico oversaw a period of institutional growth unparalleled by any other stage in Roca’s history. As President of TD Insurance Group, Joe was particularly well suited to lead Roca’s Board of Directors during this time of significant change. Under his tenure at TD, the company has rapidly grown in market share and expanded its range of services and products. So it comes as no surprise that Joe’s highly engaged and effective leadership helped Roca increase its service capacity, refine its Model, and expand to a new city.

As his time as board president comes to a close, all of us at Roca offer Joe our deep gratitude for his unwavering commitment to and belief in the important work of helping high-risk young people change their lives. His hard work and steady leadership will be missed. As a final reflection on Joe’s time with the organization, we asked him to offer some thoughts about his experience with Roca. This is what he had to say:

“I remember when I first became involved in Roca. A TD employee, Peggy Boil, introduced me after recognizing that the same beliefs and values that I held—the values that we were trying to build at TD—were the same values that Roca embraced.

One of the core competencies at TD is transparency: the total honesty to realize when something is wrong and the need to work toward changing it. Roca holds no false beliefs either. If you are abusing drugs, you are a drug abuser. If you have broken the law, you are a criminal. If you lack education, you cannot overcome poverty. Roca and TD share the understanding that you must tell the truth—you must have transparency—before you can have acceptance and change.

We have to find options for these kids. Helping them find a job might be the biggest key so that they can help themselves get out of poverty. Roca isn’t easy and people have a tendency to shy away from the difficult, but they need to understand that the cost to society is so much more than dollars. These aren’t great times for everybody. A young person who is at Roca until eight at night and gets a decent meal, gets to be on the computer or play basketball in the gym, is doing something, maybe for the first time, that isn’t personally destructive. We can’t fool ourselves into believing everything is great. You have to stay involved.

TD believes in being involved in our communities. Take Springfield: TD has about 800 employees in the greater Springfield area. It’s their children that we worry about walking home at night, their educational opportunities, and how to keep them out of gangs. Helping Roca is helping our own. It’s a big circle: anyone who is not interested in improving the lives of the people around them is not interested in improving their own life. We are not islands. We are part of society and it is our ability to be compassionate and help others that makes us human.

I am extremely proud to have been part of Roca all these years. There is no greater impact than seeing the young people who started at Roca without a place to go or a hope in the world become productive members of society or come back to Roca and become youth workers themselves. What we do, works.”

— JOE FICO, PRESIDENT & CEO, TD INSURANCE AND CHAIR OF THE ROCA BOARD OF DIRECTIONS
My mother had me when she was 12 years old. By the time I was 12, I was facing homelessness, was surrounded and affected by violence. I grew up living in shelters, not having enough food, and not understanding why my mother let this happen to me or my siblings. I could not accept this life. I wanted to someday demonstrate to my family the importance of education, work, and a future with no worries about food or violence. But it wasn’t until I got involved in Roca that I thought this could be a reality.

I remember a Roca youth worker introducing herself to me and asking about my goals in life. I didn’t even know what goals were. She showed up to my school every day to pick kids up to go to Roca and was always trying to convince me to come. When building a relationship with my youth worker, I was afraid if I let her know too much, she might give up on me; instead she gave more of her time and would go out to look for me when I didn’t show up to Roca. She based our relationship on responsibilities and values. I never knew that those two things could be so connected.

I remember sleepless nights wondering how I was going to be able to provide for my child. My youth worker sat with me; her honesty, commitment to listen and not judge anything I was saying helped me decide what I needed to do. When I decided I was going to keep the baby, she went with me to parenting classes, brought me books to read about being a young parent, and still pushed me into graduating high school and going to college. There were times I went back to not believing in myself and I would choose to be surrounded by the negative things in my life. But my youth worker stood by my side through the good and bad and let me make mistakes, and own up to them. In some way, my talks with her were very liberating and I would always be back to working on the things I need to do to become happy.

On August 8, 2008, my beautiful daughter was born and I named her Keidriana. That day, I knew I had to work on my personal behaviors, forgive my past, work on my education, find sustainable work, and a place for me and Keidriana to call home. With Roca’s advice, tears, and consistency I was able to learn my own set of values and responsibilities that I will be able to teach my daughter. I will be the first to graduate college in my family and the first to have a job for more than 10 months. I took the option that was difficult, but at the end, Keidriana will know her mother worked so hard to provide another life for her. I’m still juggling between work, classes at Bunker Hill Community College, parenting, and even being in a relationship - but this time, it’s about me juggling all these areas and being happy about where I am in life. I also now work at Roca as a youth leader and hope I can be a voice to the young mothers that go to Roca.
MOVING FROM A THREE YEAR INTENSIVE INTERVENTION TO A TWO YEAR INTENSIVE INTERVENTION

As Roca turns more of its resources toward serving young adults involved in the criminal justice system, the Crime and Justice Institute and Roca have explored the latest community corrections research. During this process, questions were raised about the length and ‘dosage’ of programming participants receive during of the intensive phase of the intervention model. Research shows that for individuals deemed to be medium to high-risk of re-offending, 40-70% programming time should focus on crime causing factors (known as “criminogenic needs”). Research also suggests exceeding that distinct quantity of programming (measured in time and intensity) can be counterproductive.

In considering this research, and in examining our organization’s own data, we made the decision to reduce the length of time participants receive intervention services, moving the model from three years to two years. This change took effect with all new enrollments in Chelsea, and all active participants in Springfield, as of July 1, 2011. Roca is also working to create outcomes-focused completion plans for individuals who have been active participants for more than two years in the intensive portion of the intervention.

FOCUSING OUR DEFINITION OF HIGH-RISK

As a learning organization, Roca incorporates practices which are evidence-based, and continues to utilize research on its target populations and its programming. In our 23 year history, we have served a wide spectrum of at-risk young people. However, as Roca seeks to use funding most effectively, research has led us to hone our target population. To maximize our impact, Roca now focuses on older adolescents with specific behavioral indicators – school expulsion, having a child before age 18, juvenile conviction, gang involvement, and not finishing high school – because of their links to what experts in the field call “adverse early adult outcomes”.

Influential in the process of focusing our target population was the groundbreaking report Critical Junctures on the Way to Adulthood: Options for Intervention, by authors Karen E. Walker and Karen B. Guzzo. In it, Walker and Guzzi conclude that focusing comprehensive programming on higher-risk older adolescents and young adults (those with a combination of multiple risk factors), is the most effective and economically sensible strategy. While the authors do not suggest ignoring younger or lower risk individuals, they argue working with higher-risk, older adolescents and young adults produces a greater return on investment, when measured by long-term social and economic indicators, such as reduction in recidivism, pregnancy rates, educational achievement and sustainable employment.
This research helped reshape the in-school population Roca serves as well as that of our Springfield site. While the in-school program originally focused on those at risk for dropping out, there is now greater emphasis on combined risk factors associated with adverse early adult outcomes. In Springfield, our target population is exclusively between the ages of 17-24, and 100% of the participants have felony criminal records, high-levels of gang involvement, no sustained employment history and no high school diploma or GED (unless attained in prison). As Roca moves forward, we will continue to focus our services in Chelsea, East Boston and Revere on this clearly-defined higher-risk group as well.

**IMPROVING WORKFORCE READINESS THROUGH STAGE-BASED PROGRAMMING**

It has become increasingly clear that sustained employment is among the most important indicators of long-term success high-risk young people. Helping young people achieve economic independence has always been a primary objective of Roca’s work, but of recent, the organization has made major strides in improving our workforce readiness programming and job placement services. In doing so, we have focused our attention on expanding stage-based pre-vocational training, refining Roca’s transitional and advanced transitional employment programming, and providing more focused, industry-specific skill building opportunities.

Partly enabled by data tracking in our Efforts to Outcomes tracking software and the use of an Access database for collecting employment information, Roca’s efforts toward greater systematization include making our Work Readiness programming more structured than it has been in the past. As stated, Roca is also placing far greater emphasis on stage-based programming, which engages young people where they are in the stages of change cognitively and behaviorally. By applying this evidence-based framework in the program delivery, young people move along a pathway of education, pre-vocational training, life skills, transitional employment and unsubsidized employment opportunities.

**ROCA’S FIRST FULL-SCALE REPlication**

Arguably the most important undertaking of the past twelve months has been our continued work in Springfield, MA, the site of the first full scale replication of Roca’s Intervention model for Very High-Risk Young People. Though our work in Springfield started more than three years ago, when we began helping the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department create a transitional employment program, Roca has since launched a brand new site, opened our new Springfield headquarters, and served 100 high-risk young men. Not only has it been a tremendous privilege to work with and within the Springfield community, it has also been an invaluable learning experience that has informed our concept of Roca’s future in a profound way.

In creating the new Springfield site, we were forced to examine the Intervention Model with new eyes. Ultimately, the replication process required Roca to focus on two distinct yet highly-interdependent areas of work. First, we needed to hone in on the most fundamental components of the model and make sure they were sound enough to be effective in a new community. Second, Roca was required to define and execute the logistical process of replication -fleshing out and implementing all of the details - without exception.

This first replication has in many ways, been an exercise in understanding how to gather the necessary inputs for success in a new city - that is, attaining the requisite financial, infrastructural, human and institutional resources. We have learned that replication must be a highly-deliberate, fully-resourced and community-supported undertaking. Local criminal justice and government partners are critical. Support of the local business, non-profit and political community is vital. And, having major funding partners that can provide the capital for program and infrastructural capacity is indispensible. But in the long view, perhaps the greatest lesson we have learned from our work in Springfield, is that Roca is indeed ready to keep growing.
U.S. incarceration rates are currently the highest in the world - five times higher than the average rates in most developed countries. Just as troubling, the United States has a growing number of young people who are disconnected, uneducated, impoverished and unable to succeed in traditional programming and employment. These disenfranchised young people have fueled the U.S.’ skyrocketing incarceration rate for years. They are also, by and large, both the perpetrators and the victims of the violence that occurs in our cities every day.

Roca understands that without deliberate, systematic intervention, these high-risk young people will continue to end up in prison or involved in violence. It has also become clear to the criminal justice system - that is, the network of institutions responsible for rehabilitating these young people and keeping the public safe - that new alternatives must be sought for dealing with the heavy burden of ballooning incarceration costs. As growing corrections budgets weigh on the minds of state officials during these economically lean times, it is increasingly apparent that incarceration cannot be the only answer for these young adults. As a result, many states are looking for other options.

Roca’s success to date suggests that it has created one of the solutions to reducing violence, poverty and incarceration rates for this very high-risk, underserved population. The time is now to implement solutions that will keep our young people both alive and out of prison. Compelled by a moral imperative to support and help young people, Roca has developed a model that we are now seeking to scale.
FINANCIALS

The selected financial information as presented represents the results of the combining of operations of Roca, Inc. and Pallin Youth Center, Inc. Pallin Youth Center is an affiliated not-for-profit corporation of Roca, Inc and shares a common board of directors.

Pallin Youth Center was formed in 1996 as a 501(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code for the sole purpose of holding title to property. Combining statements are required under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

ROCA, INC & PALLIN YOUTH CENTER, INC

FY 2011 COMBINED REVENUES

- Government Contract Revenue 3,922,767 54.59%
- Private Grants & Contributions 2,471,182 34.39%
- Donated Services 385,302 5.36%
- Special Events (Net) 223,656 3.11%
- Income from Investments 182,661 2.54%

TOTAL REVENUE 7,185,568 100%

ROCA, INC & PALLIN YOUTH CENTER, INC

FY 2011 COMBINED EXPENSES

- Adult Wages 2,504,987 33%
- Youth Wages 989,301 13%
- Program Services 2,358,448 31%
- General & Administrative 1,160,297 15%
- Development 553,460 7%

TOTAL EXPENSES 7,566,513 100%
2011 DONOR LIST

Roca acknowledges with profound thanks the kindness of these important donors. Their generosity provides us with the financial foundation for our key programs, as well as the opportunity to try innovative ideas and expand our work.

$1 MILLION +

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— YUSEF IDEEN,
ROCA SPRINGFIELD’S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
As always, Roca would like to express our sincere gratitude to our amazing staff, partners, and volunteers. Working with young people every day is a privilege, but it takes a lot of work to be ready and most helpful. We must offer a special thanks to the Roca Board of Directors – your leadership and dedication has been an invaluable resource during this exciting period in Roca’s history.

The following individuals and foundations have also been extraordinarily generous, and have allowed us to take our work to a substantially different level:

- Ellyn McColgan
- Strategic Grant Partners
- The Kresge Foundation
- The Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation

We are very grateful to the Roca Springfield Project Advisory Board leadership and help: Frank Fitzgerald, Chair, Paul Doherty, Vice Chair, Sheriff Michael J. Ashe, Honorary, Ronald Abdow, Portia Allen, Dr. Kamal Ali, Steven Bradley, Baystate Health, Daniel Brightwell, Chris Carr, Janet Callahan, Ward Caswell, Fran Cataldo, President, Anthony Falvo, Edward Fleming, Jennifer Gabriel, Jim Garvey, Robert J. Greeley, John Maiercak, Ida Kondervicz, Brian Lees, Thomas Lynch, York Mayo, Evan Plotkin, Robert Schwarz, Joe Sibilia, Katie Stebbins, Jack Stone, Steve Trueman, Sister Mary Quinn, and Bill Ward.

We are very grateful to be working with a number of people who are sharing their talent and experience with us on strategy, business development, and how to run an organization striving for excellence: Kevin Burke, Former Secretary of the MA Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Len Engels, Peter Nordblom, Susan Ulrich, Brian Hatleberg, Stephen Stoute, Dennis McGurk, and Greg Den Herder.

We also would like to thank these elected officials who have worked closely with Roca over the past year, and in years past: Governor Deval Patrick, Lt. Governor Tim Murray, United States Senator John Kerry, United States Congressman Michael Capuano, United States Congressman Ed Markey, and United States Congressman Richard Neal.


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We would also like to thank the following people and
organizations for going above and beyond: Massachusetts
General Hospital Chelsea Health Center, LAE Consulting, Chris
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Hampden County Sheriff’s Department.

Thank you to Mayor Ambrosino of Revere, Mayor Sarno of
Springfield, Chief Brian Kyes of Chelsea, Chief Terrance Reardon of
Revere, Commissioner Ed Davis of Boston, Commissioner William
Fitchet of Springfield, and Commissioner of Probation Ronald
Corbett for working with us to bring safety to the communities and
for their work with young people.

As we move forward and make important decisions about the
organization’s future, we have been lucky enough to learn from
their wisdom and receive their valuable advice. Thank you for
everything.

We would also like to take the opportunity to recognize several
people who have, throughout the past year, served as mentors
to many of us here at Roca and worked with us tirelessly to
help young people change their lives: Chelsea City Manager
Jay Ash, Hampden County Sheriff Michael J. Ashe, DYS Deputy
Commissioner Edward Dolan, and Assistant Superintendent of
Hampden County Sheriff’s Department John Fitzgerald. As we move
forward and make important decisions about the organization’s
future, we have been lucky enough to learn from their wisdom and
receive their valuable advice. Thank you for everything.

AND OF COURSE, TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE AND
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Soon after Kip Tiernan died, I was talking with a friend about a passage from the Bible. In it, Jesus says to his followers, “Do not weep for me, for I did not die. I am the quiet breeze in the trees, I did not die.” Although beautiful, it, of course, doesn’t quite apply to Kip – for there is nothing quiet about her - not in her living, and not in her death. To this day, I can hear her voice booming in my head, like a minister, calling us onto the next task, to the next act of service.

Kip’s ministry was the ministry of hope. It was, as Walter Brueggemann so aptly described, prophetic ministry - the ministry of radical change and social justice for the poorest and most disenfranchised. Kip’s ministry was one of service to homeless women, hungry children, immigrants, and prisoners. Brueggemann believed that it was the task of prophetic ministry to both criticize and energize: to criticize the status quo, confront the suffering it caused, and nourish a new reality. Kip embraced the suffering and hurt of the marginalized and poor, and in doing so, nurtured the soul of our community.

And as importantly, she invited all of us to share in this quest, to not just be aware of the suffering of others, but to feel it, and to criticize its causes so that we could then change it. In doing so, Kip created a vision for radical transformation - a vision of a different world - one of fairness and justice, food and shelter, love and compassion. One of hope. Kip believed that god was for everyone, and that god was in the street.

For Kip, the cross of Jesus was universal; something we should each take up in our own way. Kip carried it as the symbol of suffering, of criticism, of energizing, and ultimately, of resurrection. And like a great minister, imam, priest, or rabbi, she never let the most important questions of justice slip away from our minds and hearts, always asking us why so many people live in suffering, what we could do to help, and where to begin.

Kip, my mentor, my friend, and my second mother, I can hear your loud voice today, calling us to service and to prayer. We are listening. And, in your honor, we work and we pray for those that have lost so many loved ones, who face so much suffering. We work and pray for the future of our country, and the strength to overcome the many tragedies that plague it. Today, there is a growing amount of hungry children in America, a growing number of unemployed, and there are more people in prison here than anywhere else in the world. Kip, from your example, we know that these things are unacceptable, and that we have the means to change them. May your legacy be seen in our courage to carry on, to criticize, to cry and suffer with those who are poor and in prison, to seek god and find hope, and work for another reality - an alternative community - one of justice, compassion and hope.
TELLING THE TRUTH
EVEN WHEN IT’S HARD